



FAA Intercom

FAA Web Site Lists Real-Time TFRs

The FAA has upgraded its Web site to post real-time graphics detailing temporary flight restrictions (TFRs) that pilots can use when planning their flights.

The move addresses the effects of TFRs on general aviation pilots, who have expressed concern that they are not being kept up to date with the increasing and ever-changing TFRs that government officials impose for security. Pilots who violate a TFR may face a fine, suspension, or revocation of their license.

By clicking on "Pilots: Graphic TFRs" at www.faa.gov, users view a list of locations under TFRs. Clicking on a location automatically produces a real-time map of the TFR and the choice of format that best meets the viewer's needs. Also listed on the site is the text of the Notice to Airmen, with both the legal description and a plain-language version on a single page. There also is a 24-hour on-line help desk.

The FAA and AOPA are working on a plan that would enable AOPA to offer flight-planning software that builds off the TFR Web site.

"We're pleased to answer general aviation's call to offer more convenience and service in obtaining TFR information," said Administrator Marion Blakey, who announced the new site at the annual meeting of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association in

continued on page 12

FAA Feels the Heat of So. California Blazes



This VORTAC navigational aid near Filmore, Calif., northwest of Los Angeles, will be undergoing some "renovations" after its brush with Southern California fires. The VORTAC served controllers at Los Angeles International Airport.

The fires raging in Southern California have taken their toll on the FAA and its employees, both in a professional and personal way.

The Southern California Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON), located just north of San Diego, was evacuated Oct. 26 because of heavy smoke from nearby fires that obscured controllers' vision and caused health concerns in the facility. It reopened less than two days later on the morning of Oct. 28.

The San Diego Automated Flight Service Station closed for two days, while the Montgomery Field Tower in San Diego

shut down for 11 days. At their peak, the fires reduced air traffic capacity by 50 percent at Los Angeles International Airport. Hundreds of cancellations and delays were reported, with average ground delays reaching more than two hours at some points.

Numerous employees were evacuated from their homes. Three employees lost their homes to fire and another seven are awaiting word. There are no reports of injuries and all employees have been accounted for. continued on page 13

In This Issue:

Read about winners of the Administrator's awards, a last goodbye to the Concorde, a Veteran's Day story about forgiveness and redemption, and much more!



Page 4. A final send-off for Concorde.



Page 6. Return to Vietnam.



Page 8-9. FAAers win Secretary's awards.



Page 10. Finding solutions to help the disabled.



News in Brief

Use or Lose

Employees and supervisors are reminded that any use-or-lose annual leave should be scheduled and approved prior to Nov. 30, the start of the third biweekly pay period prior to the end of the leave year. The current leave-year ends Jan. 10, 2004.

Use-or-lose leave that is not scheduled and approved prior to Nov. 30 will not be eligible for restoration in the event it cannot be used due to exigency of the public business or sickness.

Employees who have had use-or-lose annual leave restored from prior years should check their statement of earnings and leave for the expiration date of their restored leave, since the expiration dates differ depending on the circumstances.

For questions, contact Sandee Lewis-Haskell at (202) 267-9604.

Cross-Cultural Exchange Strengthens FAA, Chinese Relationship

Two representatives from China's Transportation Safety Institute got an in-depth look at the FAA's flight inspection process during a visit to the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.

Earlier this year, Tom Accardi, Aviation System Standards director, coordinated with counterparts in China to send two Chinese representatives to attend the International Flight Inspection Training Program.

Afterwards, each representative was assigned to a flight inspection field office (FIFO) for two weeks, where they viewed FAA operations and got the opportunity to discuss with FAA employees different techniques used for navaid calibration, as well as to learn about the diverse social lifestyles.

One of the highlights for Su Wei, a flight inspection pilot with China's Civil Aviation Administration, was rendezvousing with the FAA's DC-3 in Phoenix to view a

flight calibration aircraft from yesteryear. He traveled with the Sacramento FIFO.

Liu Tong, an electronic technician, observed FAA employees from the Oklahoma FIFO during a 2-week itinerary.

Runway Incursion Rate Falls

The number of runway incursions fell 4.4 percent in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, compared to the prior year, according to preliminary numbers from the FAA's Runway Safety Office. Some 324 incursions were recorded in FY2003, compared to 339 in FY2002.

The FAA also surpassed its FY2003 runway safety performance goal by reducing the number of serious (Category A or B) runway incursions to 32, which is 12 below the performance limit set at 44.

Civil Rights Position Approved for SES Administrator Marion Blakey has approved a new executive position, the deputy assistant administrator for Civil Rights.

The deputy will provide leadership and managerial assistance directly to the assistant administrator for Civil Rights in directing, coordinating, controlling and ensuring the affirmative implementation of diversity, civil rights, and equal employment opportunity within the FAA.

The position will be advertised until Dec. 5 to all sources. The vacancy announcement can be found on the Office of Personnel Management Web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>, or at <http://www2.faa.gov/ahr/career/current.cfm>.

This Tower's Performance is not LAX The Los Angeles International Airport Control Tower has worked error-free for more than 510 consecutive days.

It achieved the status of "None-in-a-Million" — no incidents in 1 million operations — on Sept. 30. The number is made more impressive considering the airport is the fourth busiest in the nation, averaging nearly 2,000 operations a day.

"This major accomplishment is a result of the dedication and professionalism displayed by our workforce," said Sherry Avery, Air Traffic manager at LAX.

A total of 168 aircraft arrive and depart on the airport's four parallel runways during peak hours.



Rebecca Webster, a contractor in the Alaskan Region's Runway Safety office, demonstrates hand-held moving map technology at the Air-Land-Sea Safety Symposium in Juno, Alaska.



FSA, FEHB Open Seasons Begin

The open season for the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) program begins Nov. 10 and runs through Dec. 8, coinciding with the open season for the Federal Employees Health Benefits program.

During that period, FAA employees will be able to sign-up for the FSA program, which reimburses employees for many non-covered medical expenses, as well as child- and dependent-care costs.

The enrollment period begins with an extensive education campaign about the money-saving features of the program. The FAA will pay the FSA administrative fees for its employees.

For more information, access www.fsafeds.com.

Digital Radar Commissioned

The FAA's airport radar systems are going digital.

The agency has announced the nationwide commissioning of the first entirely digital Airport Surveillance Radar (ASR)-11, which replaces analog radars that have been in service for more than two decades.

The air traffic control system of the future requires the digital technology the ASR-11 provides. The radar will be deployed across the country.

ASR-11s detect aircraft positions and weather conditions around airports. It performs better than the old surveillance radars and provides the digital input needed by the FAA's new air traffic control automation systems, such as STARS.

The FAA plans to deploy 112 ASR-11s by 2009.

New Scholarship Program Announced
Parents looking for some help in paying the ever-rising education costs of their children have access to a new program that offers college funding in return for a period of employment by the student after graduation.



The "Scholarship For Service" has been designed to increase and strengthen the cadre of federal information assurance employees to better protect the government's critical information infrastructure.

It provides scholarships that fully fund the typical costs that students pay for books, tuition, and room and board while attending an accredited college.

Additionally, stipends of up to \$8,000 are given to undergraduates and \$12,000 to graduate students. While in school, students funded for more than a year will also serve a paid internship at a federal agency.

The agency may offer students other paid employment while they are on scholarship if it does not interfere with their studies. Information about the program is available at www.sfs.opm.gov.

Clarification

The Capital Chapter of the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees featured Michael Trujillo from the Department of the Interior and the "Mystic Warriors: Music of the Andes" as part of Headquarters' Hispanic Heritage Month Observance opening ceremony.

Hamory Awarded Prestigious Gold Medal

Ross Hamory, deputy assistant administrator for Security and Hazardous Materials, received the Secretary of Transportation's Gold Medal in a surprise announcement at this year's Secretary's Awards ceremony.

The prestigious medal is given for outstanding leadership. DOT Secretary Norman Mineta said Ross was an "employee whose contributions over the years have been representative of the outstanding, career public servant — and whose recent contributions have been beyond the call of duty and done with great personal sacrifice."

Mineta cited Hamory's work in managing FAA security issues internationally, as director of Civil Aviation Security and Planning, and as director of Intelligence and Security to the secretary.

Describing Hamory as a "consummate professional," Mineta recalled his calm, steadfast demeanor during the Sept. 11 crisis and his management of the FAA Aviation Command Center in the following days.

Lynne Osmus, who heads the Office of Security and Hazardous Materials, recalled how Hamory left his position as director of International Aviation just two days after the terrorist attacks to rejoin the aviation security organization, where his experience and effectiveness were critically needed.

"Ross's willingness to leave a job

he loved because he was needed elsewhere is representative of his professionalism and dedication, and is why we are proud to be his colleagues," Osmus said.



Ross Hamory



Cheerio to 'Speedbird'



"Time is a jet plane, it moves too fast," Bob Dylan once wrote.

If that's true, how fast and how far does time move for a supersonic aircraft? For the FAA, and two controllers in particular, the answer is Mach 2 and 26 years.

The first Concorde landed in North America in October 1977. That day, among controllers working the New York airspace were Sam Kohn and John Winters at the JFK Tower and TRACON, respectively.

As history would have it, these same two controllers handled the last takeoff of British Airways' Concorde from JFK International Airport this past Oct. 24. Theirs is a unique perspective of one of the seminal moments in U.S. aviation history.

Kohn remembers the hoopla that surrounded the first flight in 1977. Helicopters circled the airport shooting photos while demonstrators on the ground protested the plane's landing because of smog and noise concerns.

"It was a big event because of the notoriety," Kohn recalled, although personally he thought it was just another day. "It had already been flying [in Europe]," he explained.

Winters remembered aviation officials being a little on edge because they didn't know what to expect from the plane. They cleared part of the airspace because they

couldn't anticipate the Concorde's speed and the kind of turns it would make on approach.

Because of Concorde's speed, controllers always gave it a little more room — maybe an extra 2 or 3 miles — when it was landing or taking off, depending on the type of aircraft in front or in back of it. But neither Kohn nor Winters ever felt the need to go an extra mile to handle Concorde. "It fit in really well with all the other traffic we handled here," Winters said.

Flash forward at Mach 2 speed to Oct. 24, 2003. Helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft once again circled JFK to shoot photos of the Concorde.

Kohn, behind the controller's screen at the tower, said he was glad to see the final takeoff become such a newsworthy event. "It was given the attention it deserved," he said. "It was a milestone. It was unique. It was the future." There was perhaps a little sadness in Kohn's voice over what he sees as a "step backward" in technology.

Winters just wanted the chance to thank the Concorde crew for their professionalism and cooperation over the years. He has a voice tape of that thank-you saved for posterity.

The last transmission from the Concorde's captain ends this story: "New York departure, [this is] Speedbird, Concorde Two, for the last time."

FAA Rule Increases High-Altitude Capacity

Airspace capacity will increase significantly in January 2005 when the FAA implements its new reduced vertical separation minimum (RVSM) rule.

The rule reduces the minimum separation between aircraft flying at high altitudes, giving air traffic controllers more flexibility when handling traffic and allowing more planes to fly.

The rule affects planes flying between 29,000 feet and 41,000 feet. At those altitudes, the planes must maintain a minimum separation of 1,000 vertical feet, half of the current minimum.

Administrator Marion Blakey said the rule, which is an important element in the agency's 5-year strategic flight plan, offers a combination of greater safety, capacity and cost efficiency.

The Jan. 20, 2005 implementation date was selected for two reasons: it gives airlines time to modify their aircraft to meet RVSM standards and it occurs after the busy Christmas/New Year holiday period.

Airlines are expected to save \$5.3 billion in fuel costs through 2016, far exceeding the \$800 million they will need to modify their aircraft. Jets fly more efficiently at higher altitudes, so allowing more aircraft into this airspace will increase the efficiency of the country's aviation fleet.

RVSM is just another step in creating a unified global aviation system. It is already in effect in Europe and Australia and over most of the North Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Canada plans to implement RVSM in its southern airspace at the same time as the United States. Caribbean and South American countries plan to implement RVSM in 2005.

(Right) Kohn gives departure clearance for the Concorde's final flight out of JFK International. (Above) The Concorde sits on the JFK ramp prior to its final departure.





Filling Job Vacancies ASAP

FAA supervisors who are seeking ways to reduce the time and effort it takes to hire new employees will be getting some help, ASAP.

The Office of Human Resource Management is putting the finishing touches on the Automated Staffing and Application Process (ASAP), a Web-based program that should significantly improve the process for announcing and filling vacancies in the FAA.

ASAP will feature on-line applications for vacancies and automatically rate applicant knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). The FAA will store applicants' KSAs in an on-line library for future reference.

FAA hiring officials no longer will have to write crediting plans for each vacancy, as the KSA library and automated scoring program will streamline the work. There will

be less paperwork, allowing supervisors to concentrate on the interview process.

"Selecting officials will have access to a referral list of qualified candidates immediately after an announcement has closed," said Jeanne O'Connor-Link, ASAP project manager.

Applicants, too, benefit from quicker feedback about their applications and a more efficient way to apply for jobs.

Four engineering and two administrative job series will be the first vacancies listed on ASAP, with more vacancies added over the next year. The FAA eventually will use ASAP to fill all vacancies.

User testing is completed, and training is being developed for human resource specialists and hiring officials.

How Does ASAP Work?

- ◆ An FAA office will create an automated job questionnaire designed specifically for the vacancy. The questionnaire will list qualifications needed for the job.
- ◆ Applicants will create a user account and provide information about their level of proficiency for each of the required KSAs. They can save the questionnaire in progress, and complete and submit it to the FAA electronically in a later session.
- ◆ Scoring of the application will be carried out through an automated program. Applicants will be able to track the status of the application and find out whether they meet minimum qualifications.

This FAA Lab is Grounded

Forget the test tubes, beakers and microscopes. Don't look for white lab coats at the FAA's new medical research laboratory.

This facility is about 230 feet long, 20 feet wide, and weighs a couple of hundred thousand pounds empty. Oh, and it arrived at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center powered by four jet engines.

The Civil Aerospace Medical Institute (CAMI) dedicated a Boeing 747 at the Aeronautical Center last month, marking completion of the lab design and refurbishment that will be used for a variety of research and development projects. Although minus its engines, wingtips and rudder, the wide-body Boeing parked on a closed taxiway near CAMI still makes an imposing site.

The FAA bought the plane for about \$500,000 in 1995. Ken Larcher, director of the 747 project, oversaw the gutting and rebuilding of the interior of the jet to the point

where it can be used for research projects.

Electrical systems and flight control systems were removed. The floor was stripped, reinforced with fiberglass and reinstalled to handle repeated emergency evacuation drills, something regular aircraft floors are not designed to do. The ceiling was removed because the years of smoking



The FAA's new Boeing 747 laboratory is used during its triennial exercise.

in the cabin had left it colored with "orange grunge," said Larcher. Galleys and lavatories were rebuilt.

Among the projects slated for the 747 are cabin turbulence studies, cabin airflow research, disaster response, and dog training to detect narcotics and explosives. The Transportation Safety Institute and the FAA's Accident Investigation office supported work on the aircraft and uses an aft cabin area for accident investigation courses.

Each project requires Larcher and his staff to reconfigure the airplane to accommodate new specifications. For instance, a new ventilation system is being installed to study biological/chemical contamination onboard airplanes.

The Nickelodeon cable channel used the aircraft to film an educational series for kids flying alone. The jet also has become a main tour attraction at the center to promote understanding of the FAA's safety mission.



Something Gone and Something Found



If a picture's worth a thousand words, then the photo of Marty Cacioppo with a young Vietnamese girl who'd just come out surgery is worth something considerably more.

Cacioppo, an electronics technician in the Office of Air Traffic Systems Development, recently visited Vietnam to help the "Operation Smile" program in its efforts to surgically reconstruct the faces of Vietnamese children with cleft palates and harelips. These children often are stigmatized and socially ostracized.

Cacioppo carried the children out of the operating room and helped stabilize them and bring them out from under anesthesia. "It's a sense of, 'I'm carrying you out of your old life and into a new one,'" Cacioppo explained.

In a sense, Cacioppo's trip to Vietnam was a transition, too, only much more personal. He moved from an old life scarred by the memories of war into a new one in which he has become whole again.

Perhaps the defining experience in Cacioppo's old life was the 10 months he spent with the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam and then during the American invasion of Cambodia. Sgt. Cacioppo and his unit engaged in heavy fighting, living with "a constant threat that just loomed over you."

In November 1970, he flew out of Vietnam planning never to return. But he took part of the country with him, wrapped in his experiences and in the memory of lost comrades and friends left alive behind in what he termed "a world of [expletive]."

Deeper still was the memory of a tragedy: an incident involving children during a firefight in Vietnam that still chokes his voice to this day. He cannot bring himself to talk about the incident, other than to say, "There's guilt. I was part of the big green machine that brought death and destruction. I thought I'd brought it personally."

In the ensuing years he began to volunteer with a number of charities that help



Cacioppo comforts a Vietnamese child following her surgery for a harelip.

Photo: Marc Ascher

children, including the Special Olympics, the Angel Flight program that transports seriously ill patients — often children — free of charge to medical facilities, and Children's Hospital's pediatric AIDS program.

A stint with another charity that supplied children with prosthetics nearly took Cacioppo back to Vietnam in 1990, but he backed out at the last minute. "I was afraid of my emotions. I'd spent 20 years pushing it down and I just didn't know how I'd react."

But the urge to "go back and do something good" finally swayed him while he was fundraising for Operation Smile. The organization (CFC charity #2783) let him join a mission to Vietnam if he paid his own way, to which Cacioppo agreed.

The trip took him to Vung Tau, southeast of Saigon on the South China Sea. His first job was heart wrenching: winnowing the number of eligible patients from 250 to half that number. "It's very difficult to say to people, 'Sorry, we can't take care of your kid,'" he recalled.

The war years came back to him in a chance meeting with a Vietnamese army officer, too young to know anything about the war except the history he'd been taught in school. A college graduate, the officer spoke

perfect English as he recounted without boasting his view of America's defeat to some "rice farmers." "Thirty years later," the officer told Cacioppo, "you Americans pay your own way to come halfway around the world to fix my daughter's mouth for free. Americans really are good people." Then he shook hands with Cacioppo and expressed the hope "there would always be peace between your country and mine."

"That was a magic moment," Cacioppo recalled.

The transition to his new life had begun. Throughout the week Cacioppo marveled at how friendly the Vietnamese people were, describing the country as "a wonderful place to be."

He found a buddy in a Vietnam veteran who'd served as a medic during the war. The emotions of the trip and returning to his past swelled throughout the week. "You're just always on this precipice of tears," he said.

On the last day, the American mission met with a woman leading the Vietnamese medical team. In a rehearsed speech, Cacioppo thanked her for welcoming him back to Vietnam and accepting him. Then, in an impromptu speech, Cacioppo told the woman that the visit "had helped me find part of my soul that I didn't even know was gone." He flew out of Vietnam the next day with "something gone and something found."

Cacioppo is planning to return to Vietnam next spring. "I just want to continue to help people. There's no bugaboo anymore."

On Nov. 11, he'll don his uniform and visit the Vietnam War Memorial by himself for "some private and quiet time between me and my guys," he said.

On that day Cacioppo faces the wall and confronts the things that can never be put behind him.



Chew: FAA Must Change, Manage Costs

In a cut-to-the-chase speech to a large audience at the annual Air Traffic Control Association meeting, FAA Chief Operating Officer Russ Chew imparted his philosophy of leadership, and real-world insight into how and why the FAA must change.

"Not many federal agencies operate a service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year like we do at the FAA," he stated. "But, we can't do it alone and we can't continue to do it the way we always have."

The FAA must understand that it is an organization that provides quality services to multiple customers, Chew said, while the agency's customers must understand they must be part of the process if the FAA is to succeed.

"There is not enough money to fulfill everyone's wish list," Chew warned. Customers need to define and prioritize their requirements and the FAA needs a deliberate planning process that stops these reactionary program cuts and instead, manages, measures and budgets our costs. We need input from our customers, our owners, and our employees."

Chew was one of five panelists who participated in a morning session to assess the current air transportation environment — and what impact events over the past two years will have on current and future systems requirements.

Panelists heard some pointed questions from audience members in the question-and-answer segment. One person asked how, and if, things will really change over the next 40 years.

Chew responded that if change is expected, then rules must be changed. Modernization will only happen within a well-managed organization, Chew said. New tools require new rules and the FAA must change its environment to one that is decision-based, not debate-based. The FAA will find the certainty of the future by creating, not debating, he said.

Don't Forget the TSP Open Season

FAA employees have until the end of the year to make changes to or enroll in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

During the open season, FERS employees may elect to contribute up to 14 percent of their base pay, while CSRS employees will be able to contribute up to 9 percent of their basic pay. The maximum amount any employee may contribute for 2004 is \$13,000.

Employees planning to retire, separating from federal service, or transferring to another agency should contact their servicing Human Resource Management Division to make TSP open season changes instead of using Employee Express. Employees may not use government or franked envelopes when mailing Form TSP-1.

To allocate future contributions or



THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

Starting up TSP contributions or changing them can be done through Employee Express (access www.employeeexpress.gov, or call (478) 757-3084; TDD lines are available for the hearing impaired at (478) 757-3117), or by submitting Form TSP-1 (Election Form) to the Human Resource Management Division.

make transfers among the five funds, employees may use the TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov, TSP Thriftline at (504) 255-8777, or Form TSP-50, (Investment Allocation). Individuals enrolling for the first time in the TSP should not submit Form TSP-50 until they receive a letter that confirms their new account has been established.

Nominations Sought for EEO Awards

The Office of Civil Rights is accepting nominations for the 27th annual Administrator's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Affirmative Employment and Diversity Awards.

The deadline for submitting nomination packages to the Office of Civil Rights, ACR-6, is Dec. 19.

The awards highlight individual and team achievements during Fiscal Year 2003 in championing, attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse and productive FAA workforce. The Administrator's EEO Award is the highest FAA recognition given to employees who have made significant contributions in EEO, affirmative employment and diversity.

To obtain a copy of nomination criteria and instructions, employees should contact the awards coordinator in their line of business or staff office. Electronic versions of the forms can be e-mailed to employees if they contact their servicing Civil Rights office.

The Civil Rights office believes it is important for employees to recognize and celebrate the achievements of their coworkers who have helped FAA accomplish its goal in fostering one of the finest government workforces.

For more information, contact Deena Collier at (202) 366-8755, or via e-mail at Deena.Collier@FAA.gov.



DOT's Mineta Honors FAA Employees

Norman Y. Mineta, Secretary of Transportation, honored 106 FAA employees who individually or as part of a team exemplified the agency's workforce in eight categories. This includes 65 employees who served or are serving in Iraq or participated in rebuilding the transportation infrastructure in Iraq.

In a surprise announcement, Mineta gave Ross Hamory, deputy assistant administrator for Security and Hazardous Materials, the prestigious Gold Medal for outstanding leadership (see story on p. 3).

Administrator Marion Blakey held a separate ceremony at Headquarters for the winners. "We must encourage excellence in each employee if we are to be a more

efficient, more responsible, more performance-based organization," she told the audience.

"The great thing about this particular event," she added, "is that I get to meet some of these people, shake their hands and tell them that the secretary and I truly appreciate the work they do."

This year's recipients were:

Partnering for Excellence



The Flight Standards TSA Issues Working Group won this award. Its members were (from left) John J. Wood, Stephen P. Jenkins and Annmarie Avila from the TSA, and David F. Kountz (AEA), Paula Kathleen McDonald (AEA), Dennis R. Pratte (HQ) and Bryan L. Watson (AEA). Not pictured is Owen T. Dullaghan (AWP).

Meritorious Achievement



The winners of this award were (from left) Dr. Edward Y. Matheke (AMC), Gladys Davis (ASO), Ivor Thomas (HQ), Fanny Rivera (HQ), Larry R. Badger (AGL), and Richard F. Stahler (ASO). Not pictured is Robert S. Holland (AWP).

Volunteer



Dennis Steelman (ACT)

Valor



James Betts (AAL)

Team



The Columbia Space Shuttle Team won this award. Its members were (from left) Steven B. Wallace, Laura J. Brown, Paul Wilde, and Daniel P. Diggins, all from HQ.



with Secretary's Awards

Iraqi Freedom/Afghanistan (Enduring Freedom) Service



The Iraq Rapid Civil Aviation Assistance Team won this award. The members of the team include (from left, front row) Paul C. Bartko (HQ), Douglas Gould (HQ), David Haddad (ASW), Franklin Hatfield (HQ), and (back row) Robert Sweet (HQ), James Arrasmith (HQ) and Leon Hogan (AEA).



Additional members of the team were (from left) Mark E. Taylor (ANM), Matthew Cavanaugh (ANM), Donald Insley (HQ), James White (HQ) and Peter Kacerguis (HQ). Not pictured are Michael E. Daniel (HQ), E. Ross Hamory (HQ), Steven J. Brown (HQ), Douglas E. Lavin (HQ), Wilton J. Smith (HQ), Phillip Leman (HQ) and Brian Staurseth (AAL).

Intermodal Award - Volunteer *



Representing the winning DOT Tutoring Team were Gladys Clayton and Sue Helzer. Not pictured are Sherlock Bruce and Letitia Peters. They all are from HQ.

Excellence



This year's winners are (from left) Nancy A. Caudill (ASO), Barbara Marienfeld (AGL), Donna G. Potter (AMC), Debra Lynn Miller (AEA), Renne E. Piermarini (ASO), and Lori D. Samuel (AMC).

EEO



Teresa Farrell (AMC)

*Photos are not available for the recipients of two other intermodal awards. Members of the Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Review Team, which received the Partnering for Excellence Award, included Victoria Catlett (HQ), James Byers (AEA), Ben DeLeon (HQ), Daphne Fuller (HQ), Dave Kessler (AWP), Lynne Pickard (HQ) and Ralph Thompson (HQ).

Also, David Richards (HQ) was part of the Airline Stabilization Act Compensation Team, which won the Team Award.



Getting a Fix on Assisting People with Disabilities

FAA employees from the William J. Hughes Technical Center have solved a problem that gives persons with disabilities better access to controls on equipment at air route traffic control centers.

The problem involves controllers who use wheelchairs who cannot reach the volume and lighting controls on the upper part of the Display System Replacement (DSR) console. The controls allowed the controller to better hear conversations with pilots, neighboring air facilities, or coworkers in the center. They also allowed the controller to better see navigational maps and position flight strip bays above his or her position.

Jim Dwyer, a controller and wheelchair user at the Jacksonville (Fla.) Center, is one of a handful of controllers around the country who uses a wheelchair. He expressed frustration about moving from the old M-1 console — where controls could be accessed immediately — to the DSR, where they weren't reachable.

"You have to somehow tailor that frustration with having somebody else make those adjustments whenever they were needed," he said.

During DSR implementation, disability specialists recommended using "reach sticks" — a standard practice — to access upper controls, but it was not effective for everyone. Dwyer urged the FAA to devise a better method for accessing the controls.

So the FAA looked to its own employees for a solution. Into the picture stepped engineers from the National



Enroute Automation Division. Born problem solvers and obstacle jumpers, these engineers are used to fixing everyday problems associated with high technology. But after interviewing a Miami Center controller to discern his needs, the 3-man team realized this case presented a quite different challenge

The parameters under which the team worked were pretty tight. None of the controls on the console could be rearranged because all controllers had to be able to use them. Space within the console was often cramped and devices to implement the fix had to be fabricated by the team members.

"Most of the work that we do is commercially produced hardware or software," noted Thomas Ackermann, the team lead. "This was a very unique project that we took on."

The team conceived of a potential solution — using a TV-like remote control to adjust volume and lighting — then set about to make it work.

They tested their solution on a console in the Jacksonville Center for Dwyer. "It's an outstanding fix," said Dwyer. "Ackermann and his guys deserve an accolade on this."

Jim Dwyer uses the remote designed to help controllers in wheelchairs operate controls on DSR consoles. (Below, left) This remote control allows wheelchair users to access console controls at FAA centers.

But Dwyer pointed out that an accessible console should have been part of the initial design. Rick Day, Southern Region Air Traffic manager, agreed. "It's a lot easier to design in [a solution from the start] than it is to retrofit on the back side."

Mary Wingard, Air Traffic Occupational Safety and Health manager, echoed the need to ensure that the design of facilities, systems and equipment meet standards for uniform federal accessibility and those set by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Fire, life and safety requirements also need to be met up front to avoid costly retrofits and situations that negatively affect the workforce, she added.

Wingard said new controls will be installed at the Miami Center now that the Jacksonville modification has been completed. The Air Traffic Enroute Planning Branch is responsible for identifying the centers that have controllers using wheelchairs and managing an inventory that will be available for future needs.

"My big hope is that whoever follows me that is in a similar position, it will be easier for them than it was for me," said Dwyer.

For more information on accessibility, contact Karen Schunter at (202) 493-4277.





FAA Web Site Continues to Evolve

The new look of the FAA's Internet home page premiered Sept. 26 and has drawn positive reaction from the public and employees. The redesign was just the first step in an ongoing evolution of the site. Phyllis Preston, Web manager, discussed the new design and what's in store for the future.

What's been the public's reaction to the new Web site?

The public reaction has been very good. We have gotten lots of e-mail complimenting the changes and telling us they like the new site and find it easier to use.

Also, as you probably remember, in July we began a Web customer satisfaction survey. We wanted to establish a baseline satisfaction score before making any changes to the Web site and have a way to measure the impact of any changes.

The satisfaction score was a 62. To put that in perspective, the average score of the 22 federal agencies using the survey is 70, and 17 of the 22 scored above 62.

Since the launch, our overall satisfaction score has gone up to 68. Foresee Results, the company that runs the survey and analyzes the results, says that the data shows that people love the design.

What have you learned from the customer satisfaction survey?

A few important things – some are surprising, others are not. For example, pilots are the largest visitor group — about 24 percent — and that isn't a surprise. What did surprise us was the number of first-time visitors at the site, about 22 percent weekly. Another 23 percent said they visit every day or once a week.

In response to questions about "What were you looking for," the results are that people are looking for regulations, advisory circulars and airworthiness directives, and safety information.

Since the launch of the site, there hasn't been much of a change in who visits

the site, how often they visit or what they're looking for. But, more people told us they did find what they were looking for.

What other kinds of feedback have you received?

In addition to the survey data, we got lots of e-mail complimenting the new design and telling us the site was easier to use. Also, the new "Frequently Asked Questions" section is getting a lot of use. For example, the question, "How do I replace my pilots license," has been viewed over 14,800 times since Sept. 26. "How do I become a pilot" has been viewed almost 12,000 times.

At the same time, the e-mail going to the FAA Web manager and the consumer complaints e-mail boxes has dropped dramatically since the launch.

Before the launch those mailboxes got about 200 email messages each day. Since the launch, those e-mail boxes are getting about half that number. This tells us that the question-and-answer section is working well. So we're working with all the lines of business to make sure the questions they get asked most often are added to that section.

What's next in store for the site?

We're anxious to expand the design to include all FAA pages, but we want to make sure that we make the transition in ways that make sense. We are developing new guidance, standards, templates and instructions for FAA Web staffs and developers. We'll work with the Web Council and each FAA organization to make sure that before content is moved to the new look, it is reviewed to make sure it is up to date, accurate and written in plain language.

Also, we are constantly making changes to the content to make sure information that people are looking for is easy to find. We'll be doing some focus groups to get face-to-face feedback on the new site.

Based on data from the customer survey, we'll be considering adding information for specific groups, such as first-time visitors and pilots.

What is the time frame?

A recent Web inventory led by the FAA's chief information officer found that there are over 1 million pages on FAA Web sites. Our goal is that by next September, all FAA Web pages will follow the new design and content standards.



Preston discusses a Web issue with Carmen Marco, Web development team lead.



Strengthening the Spirit

The month of November marks the nationwide observance of American Indian Heritage as part of our national character.

The significance of this year's theme, "Strengthening the Spirit," is underscored in Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta's message for the annual observance: "Strengthening the Spirit" ... recurs in American Indian culture as an acknowledgment of the connection of body, mind, emotions and spirit to the earth and all living things on it. It reminds us to be respectful of each other and our natural world so that generations to come may enjoy the bounties we benefit from today."

American Indians have contributed much to U.S. history and have been influential in many areas of expertise, from education to industry. One recent example is astronaut John Herrington, the first tribally registered (Chickasaw Nation) Native American astronaut to fly on the Space Shuttle.

Herrington served as flight engineer on the Space Shuttle Endeavor when it flew



Cmdr. John Herrington became the first tribally registered Native American astronaut launched into space when he flew on the Space Shuttle Endeavor on Nov. 23, 2002.

to the International Space Station in November 2002. He also was one of the astronauts who conducted three spacewalks outside the station. Herrington carried a flag of the Chickasaw Nation with him to honor his Native American heritage.

Representatives of the Native American Alaska Native (NAAN) coalition of FAA employees will be sponsoring educational and fun events for the duration of the month (Headquarters employees can find a list of local events in the "Back to Headquarters" section on p. 15). Events include Native American guest speakers, films to raise awareness and expand knowledge of Native American and Alaska Native culture, food sampling, an American-Indian Taco luncheon, and displays of Native American history, arts and crafts.

Contact your local regional NAAN representative for more information on regional events. The names and numbers of representatives and other information on NAAN can be accessed at www.faanaan.org.

The Accountability Board Corner

Did you know? About one-fourth of all allegations tracked by the Accountability Board during Fiscal Year 2002 involved the misuse of government computers.

Computer misuse takes several forms, including accessing and downloading sexually related material and using sexually offensive screensavers. Using electronic mail to send sexually explicit jokes and cartoons also is considered misuse.

Reported cases of e-mail misuse doubled between FY 2001 and FY 2002. FAA management takes all computer misuse seriously. During FY2002 the FAA took disciplinary action against 35 employees for misuse of agency computers. These actions included 11 verbal or written admonishments or reprimands; 18 suspensions ranging from

one day to 14 days; and six removals, terminations, or resignations/retirements in lieu of removal.

In cases involving unknown users, steps were taken to prevent the misuse of "common use" computers. Management also conducted inquiries and security investigations to identify those involved. In egregious cases, such as accessing child pornography, local and national law enforcement organizations became involved. There were five cases of this nature involving agency employees during FY 2001 and 2002.

For more information about the board, access www1.faa.gov/ahr/account/account.cfm. Employees may contact the board by e-mail at 9-AWA-AHR-Accountability-Board, or by calling (202) 267-3065.

FAA Upgrades TFR Web Site

continued from the front page

Philadelphia. "With a few mouse clicks, pilots will now be able to get more timely, accurate information, plan around TFRs and avoid violations," Blakey said.

The FAA regularly imposes TFRs for security or safety reasons throughout the country. Working with agencies such as the U.S. Secret Service, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense, the FAA establishes TFRs for the protection of the president, vice president and other world leaders when they travel.

Similar restrictions are common around such events as air shows, large outdoor gatherings, and forest fire sites.



FEMA, FEEA to Help Fire Victims

continued from front page

Several FAA facilities have sustained smoke damage.

At times the whole Southern California area was covered with smoke and there are disruptions to air carrier services all across the area. Roads are closed in some areas and citizens in the San Diego area have been asked to stay home.

"Everyone here has been doing a great job working on recovery of the system."

President George Bush has declared Southern California as an official disaster area, clearing the way for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide assistance to those affected by the fires.

Individuals may apply for FEMA assistance by calling (800) 621-FEMA (3362). The speech or hearing impaired may call (TTY) 1-800-462-7585. They also may access the FEMA Web site at www.fema.gov and clicking on "How to Apply for Assistance" on the front page.

Callers should be prepared to give their Social Security number, describe their losses, provide financial information, and give directions to the damaged property.

The Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund (FEEA) has established a fund to assist federal families affected by the fire. Call FEEA at (800) 323-4140 or e-mail feeahq@aol.com to receive information about grants and no-interest loans to help with temporary shelter, clean-up, rebuilding and other expenses.

Donations to the fund can be made by check to FEEA 2003 Southern California Federal Employee Fire Fund, 8441 W. Bowles Ave., Suite 200, Littleton, CO 80123-9501, or via credit card at www.feea.org, or by calling (303) 933-7580.

Predicting the Unpredictable

Imagine if a motor vehicle department could tell drivers that a streetlight at a busy intersection would stop functioning or malfunction 30 hours ahead of time. Drivers could take alternative routes or at least be prepared to deal with traffic.

The FAA is able to do something similar using a new program that warns pilots more than a day in advance of outages in the Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS). General aviation pilots now will have heretofore unavailable but important information they need to plan their flights.

This is the first time the FAA has been able to issue a notice to airmen (NOTAM) that a navigational tool will not be available in their area at a certain time.

The FAA notifies its Flight Service Station specialists using the Military Operations electronic communications system platform at the Operations Command Center in Herndon, Va. The specialists then fax warnings to general aviation pilots. The FAA hopes to e-mail warnings in the future.

WAAS modifies navigational signals from satellites to such a degree that pilots can use them in all phases of flight, including approaches. But it's imperative that pilots

know ahead of time if WAAS will not be available in a certain location when they're flying. That's what the NOTAM prediction software does.

WAAS outages can occur if the combined WAAS and Global Positioning Satellite signal is not adequate in a particular area. Outages usually last about 15 minutes and normally occur about a half dozen times a day across the entire country when all GPS satellites are in service. When one or two GPS satellites are out of service for a period of time, the average number of 15-minute outages might increase to 10-20 throughout the United States, mostly on the coastal areas.

Outages are reported as "WAAS unreliable," which means pilots can use the signal as long as their equipment indicates they have good reception. The only time "WAAS unavailable" is reported is when one or both WAAS satellites are not in service.

The FAA's Office of Traffic and Operations Management developed the software with industry partners Volpe Center and Crown Consulting. The software was commissioned five months ahead of schedule.

Tips for Writing in Plain Language

The FAA Intercom occasionally will run tips on how employees can write in plainer language. The tips are part of the effort supported by Administrator Marion Blakey to make FAA regulations and other communication easier for customers to understand.

Use a limited number of initials, abbreviations, and acronyms. Use an abbreviation, initials or acronym for the main topic of your document. For example, if the document is about the Coordinated Operational Approval Process, write it out the first time and in parenthesis type the abbreviation, "COAP." Use the



abbreviation throughout the document. Since that's what your document is about, it's unlikely to confuse your reader. But avoid

using other abbreviations in the same document. Either write out in full or use a short form of the name. For example, call the Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee "the committee," not ARAC. That will help your reader remember what you're talking about. If you use a term only a few times, write it out every time.



Recognition

The FAA selected Prof. John-Paul Clarke from the MIT Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics as the winner of its 2003 Excellence in Aviation Award. This award is presented annually to individuals and institutions that show how past research benefits the aviation community today.

The Little Rock Flight Standards District Office certificated Southern Arkansas University Tech's CFR Part 147 maintenance school. This was a joint effort between the states of Texas and Arkansas to provide A&P maintenance training to high school students from both states.



Mike Zenkovich (center), manager of the Little Rock FSDO, presents a plaque to Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee during the certification ceremony of a new maintenance school. At right is Dr. Roger Worsley, chancellor of the school.

The National Air Transportation Association (NATA) recognized two Flight Standards employees at a recent conference. Administrator Marion Blakey presented the awards on behalf of NATA to Diana Frohn, manager of the General Aviation and Repair Station Branch; and Wayne Fry, an aviation safety inspector in Airway Facilities, for their help in educating

thousands of people in industry and government about carrying out the Part 145 repair station rule and field approval process.

The Air Traffic Control Association presented its Merit Awards for 2003 to recognize outstanding achievements and contributions to the development, operation and maintenance of the global air traffic control system. Among the awards presented were: the General E. R. Quesada Memorial Award, given to Joe E. Gingles, manager of the Casper AFSS; and the William A. Parenteau Memorial Award, to Peter Ng, a computer specialist in the New England Air Traffic Division.

Air Traffic Control Specialist of the Year Awards were given to Joseph D. Pleskac, air traffic control specialist, Milwaukee Tower (tower); and Joseph T. Calamita, support specialist at the Jonesboro AFSS in Arkansas. An Airway Transportation System Specialist of the Year Award went to Eusebio Quintana-Rosario from the Orlando SSC.

Raymond Mueller, air traffic management coordinator at the New York TRACON, won the David J. Hurley Memorial Award.

The following employees received Citation of Merit Awards from ATCA: Jeffrey D. Kadesch, airway transportation system specialist, Potomac TRACON; the staff of the Orlando Tower; Thomas McGarr, air traffic control specialist, Chicago Center; Mark Petersen, air traffic control specialist, Seattle Center; Craig Harryman, air traffic control specialist, Oklahoma City TRACON; and Tim Sjoberg, air traffic control specialist at the Albuquerque Center.

NASA recognized four FAA employees for their outstanding contributions toward the agency's enterprise goals and objectives. Ralph Yost and Pete McHugh from the William J. Hughes Technical Center; and George Greene and Jim Branstetter from the Office of Aviation Research were honored for their work as part of the team

developing the airborne Internet. Branstetter also received recognition for his work on the terrain portrayal for head-down displays simulation and flight test team. Also, NASA awarded plaques to the staffs of the Anchorage Aircraft Certification Office, Small Aircraft Directorate, and Capstone 2 program for their significant contributions to the success of this team.

The Northwest Mountain Region named Centennial Airport Tower its Level 9 Facility of the Year for outstanding performance in 2002. Centennial Airport, located in Denver, Colo., is the second busiest VFR-tower controlled airport in the nation.

John Iberg, New England Region Civil Rights manager, was honored by the Greater Boston Federal Executive Board as manager of the year by the Greater Boston Federal Executive Board.



New England Regional Administrator Amy L. Corbett has been appointed to the Board of Directors for the Greater Boston Federal Executive Board.

The Dallas-Fort Worth Federal Executive Board presented its 2003 Outstanding Community Service Award to Alma L. Ramirez, project manager in the Airplane Certification Office of the Southwest Region. The award recognizes her for enhancing the image of federal employees through outstanding volunteer community service.



Back to Headquarters

Making a Difference

Hundreds of FAA and Department of Transportation employees donated women's clothing and accessories to the Transportation Federal Credit Union's annual Suited for Change clothing drive.

Employees donated enough clothing, shoes, handbags, and jewelry to fill two trucks. Theresa Berezansky, the credit union's director of marketing, marveled at the quality of the donations received, which included Jones of New York suits and Coach handbags.



Contributions are given to women re-entering the workforce who need to update their wardrobe for interviews and when starting new jobs.

"The Suited for Change employees were thankful for the generous contributions because the organization was nearly out of clothing," Berezansky said. The credit union received the largest amount of clothing from FAA employees, Berezansky noted.

The credit union is hosting a food drive this month. Non-perishable goods collected will be delivered to charities the week before Thanksgiving.

DOT Celebrates

American Indian Heritage Month
The Department of Transportation has scheduled an event to observe National American Indian Heritage Month. This year's theme, "Strengthening the Spirit," will be celebrated at the DOT's kick-off event on Nov. 20 in the Oklahoma City Room of the Nassif Building from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Featured at the event will be Mary Arpante Sunbeam, an Eastern band Cherokee, poet, herbalist, dancer, musician, storyteller and educator in cultural behavior. Her stories reflect a lifetime of personal and

tribal experiences, as well as ancestral legends that show why one should remain within "the circle of life," respecting oneself, the family, the community, and the environment. The importance of respect, tolerance, self-esteem, and listening are interwoven into the stories with interactive drumming, singing, and dance.

Helping Students with Disabilities

Learn about their Abilities
FAA employees at Headquarters mentored more than 20 high school and college students with disabilities as part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, held every October.

The American Association of People with Disabilities hosts Disability Mentoring Day nationally with support from the U.S. Department of Labor, other federal agencies and corporations. This year marked the first time that the FAA had arranged to mentor students with disabilities.

The students were matched with employees based on their interests or areas of study. They spent the day with their mentors, were treated to lunch, had a chance to visit the National Aviation Safety Data Analysis Center, and got first-hand experience in the working world.

Michael LaJuene, a terminal/enroute procedures specialist in Air Traffic,

approached the mentoring opportunity from a point of view different from most employees. A quadriplegic, LaJuene doesn't consider it a big deal to mentor those with disabilities. "For me it doesn't matter. I've got more important things to worry about," he said.

LaJuene said he learned as much about trains from railroad buff Mark Korenge as his protégé learned about airplanes. Korenge, a high school student in Gaithersburg, Md., took LaJuene to the railroad tracks that run by HQ and gave a detailed description of the train, its cars and their purposes. "My expectations were just totally blown out of the water," LaJuene said.

Korenge got to witness Air Force One take off from Andrews Air Force Base and tour the Reagan Washington National Tower, which he said was his favorite part of the day.

Barbara Edwards, deputy assistant administrator for Civil Rights, said her mentoring reinforced the idea "that everyone is special and has a talent and a gift."

Edwards mentored Maghan Musket from McLean High School in Virginia. Maghan was impressed by the size of Headquarters and how self-contained the building was.

"She wanted to know if people lived in the building, Edwards recalled. "She was very excited," her mentor said. "She wants to come again."



Mark Korenge (right) from Gaithersburg High School in Maryland meets his mentor, FAAer Mike LaJuene.



EAP Prepared to Help during Tough Times

Everyone needs help from time to time dealing with life's challenges. Often it's not the unexpected that catches us off guard. It's more likely to be the predictable events and transitions in our lives — things like starting a new career, marriage, the birth of a child, the challenges teenagers present, or buying a house — that find us unprepared.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here to help when you're looking for ways to better manage your life or feel like you need help dealing with a situation that's troubling you.

The EAP has developed a comprehensive, nationwide network of licensed and experienced counselors, including psychologists, clinical social workers, and marriage, family and child counselors. These counselors are located at offices convenient to your home or work.

They can help you with such issues as work stress, anger management, family/parenting issues, alcohol or drug dependencies, coping with change, marital or relationship problems, anxiety or depression, and grief or bereavement.

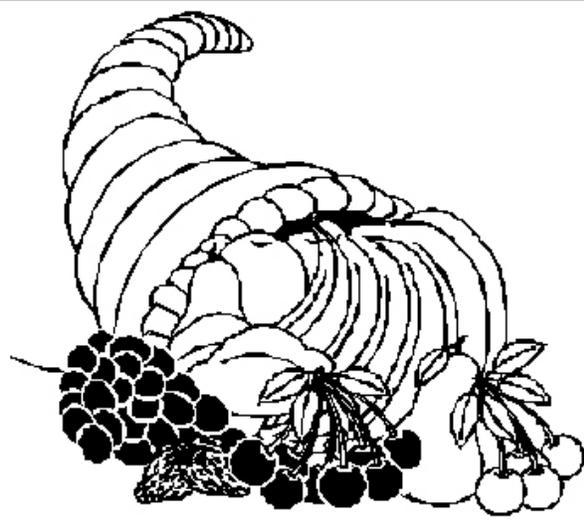
The EAP is a free service to FAA employees that offers up to four counseling sessions. You, your family/household members, and retirees within the last year can receive EAP services by calling (800) 234-1327.

All calls and counseling sessions are confidential, except as required by law (e.g. when a person's emotional condition is a threat to him or herself, or others, or there is suspected abuse of a minor child, and in some states, spousal or elder abuse).

Visit www.magellanassist.com (use 800 234 1327 as the log-on number) for more information.

Happy Thanksgiving!

To our coworkers from the FAA Intercom staff.



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